High Speed trains

1816. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that high-speed trains would be introduced in major metropolitan cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the target for commencing the trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) The idea of High Speed (speeds in excess of 250 kmph.) rail links between major metropolitan cities is still at a conceptual stage. On 21.1.2000, Ministry of Railways, in cooperation with International Union of Railways, Paris organised a seminar to learn from the experiences of countries such as France, United Kingdom, Spain and Japan in the area of High Speed Rail.

Experts from UIC, Japan, France, Spain and United Kingdom participated in this Seminar and shared their experiences with the Indian participants. Representatives of Governments of Tamilnadu, Gujarat and U.P also attended this Seminar. A paper was presented by RITES with regard to the concept of introduction of High Speed trains in the country to cater to the passenger traffic between certain large cities. As Indian Railways is still in the process of understanding the technology, investments, and other issues involved, and any detailed feasibility study is yet to be undertaken, no target date can be suggested for implementation of such High Speed rail links.

Development of Vijayawada Railway Station

1817. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Vijayawada Railway Station would soon be developed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the work would start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Works relating to repairs to the existing booking office, extension of platform No. 1, washable aprons on platforms No. 4 & 5; refreshment stall on platform No. 4 & 5; computerised announcement system and improvement to the Enquiry System and improvements to the drinking water supply have been completed recently at a cost of Rs. 88.65 lakh.

As a measure of further improvement / beautification, the provision of additional water coolers, paving of platforms surfaces; improvements to base kitchen; replacement of seating arrangements in waiting room; replacement of tiles in retiring rooms and toilets; improvements to drinking water supply; provision of cloak room; provision of escalators, coaching electric display boards; opening of additional booking counters at least booking office and beautification of station building have also been taken up at an estimated total cost of Rs. 2.69 crore.

Bids for Bogie Flat wagons by Container Corporation of India

1818. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether bids were opened in July, 1999, by Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) for procurement of 600 Bogie Flat Wagons;

(b) if so, whether the lowest offer of Rs. 60.41 crore (approx). from Burn Standard and Company, a CPSU located in West Bengal, was rejected by CONCOR;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and if not, why the order could not be placed on the lowest bidder; and

(d) whether the then Ministry of Industry had also approached the Railways to intervene in the matter?